

## Claims

1. An index generation method comprising the steps of:  
defining, in advance, basic index information concerning an index that constitutes data that describes  
5 contents; and  
generating said index by employing operating procedures that use said basic index information,  
wherein information relative to a triggering action for the generation of an index and information concerning a  
10 timespan for said index are defined for said basic index information.
2. The index generation method according to claim 1, wherein said information concerning said timespan, which is defined as said basic index information, is a timespan  
15 extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index start, and a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index end.
3. The index generation method according to claim 1, wherein the weight of said index is defined for said basic  
20 index information.
4. The index generation method according to claim 1, wherein said basic index information defines information concerning the hierarchy for a single triggering index that is formed for a single triggering action, and the higher  
25 index is added when the lower index is added.

5. The index generation method according to claim 1, wherein said basic index information defines information concerning said index that is formed by the effects produced by multiple triggering actions.

5 6. An index generation method that uses a triggering action to trigger the index generation of an index which is data concerning contents, comprising the steps of:

selecting a triggering action from among multiple triggering actions that are defined in advance;

10 determining an index effective time range for said selected triggering action, based on a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index start and a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index end, said timespans being defined in  
15 advance; and

generating an index corresponding to said triggering action based on said effective time range.

7. The index generation method according to claim 6, wherein another index for which a part, or all of said  
20 effective time range is determined is added to contents.

8. The index generation method according to claim 6, wherein for said timespan extending from the occurrence of said triggering action to said index start, and said timespan extending from the occurrence of said triggering  
25 action to said index end, a different value is defined in advance for each triggering action, and said effective time

range is determined based on said defined value.

9. An index generation apparatus for generating an index, which is data that describes contents, comprising:

index data definition means for defining index data to  
5 be added to contents in advance;

contents output means for outputting contents to which  
said index is added;

triggering action input means for receiving a  
triggering action, which acts as a trigger for an index,  
10 relative to said contents; and

index generation means for generating said index based  
on said index data defined by said index data definition  
means, and said triggering action being received by said  
triggering action input means.

15 10. The index generation apparatus according to claim 9,  
wherein said index data that is defined by said index data  
definition means includes:

triggering information that defines information  
concerning a triggering action; and single triggering index  
20 information for determining an effective time range formed  
by the occurrence of a triggering action and the importance  
level of an index.

11. The index generation apparatus according to claim 10,  
wherein said index data that is defined by said index data  
25 definition means includes:

multiple triggering index information that defines

index data obtained by multiple triggering actions affecting each other; and

additional information that defines information to be individually added to indexes.

- 5 12. The index generation apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising:

input history data storage means for storing said received triggering action as history;

- 10 correction contents output means for employing said triggering action stored in said input history data storage means to display or output contents used for correction; and

triggering action correction means for correcting said triggering action for said contents that is output by said correction contents output means.

- 15 13. An index generation apparatus, for generating an index that provides meaningful information concerning video, comprising:

- 20 display means, for displaying video and for displaying a list of triggering action types, which act as a trigger for an index addition, that are registered in advance; and

input means, for receiving, in accordance with the occurrence of a triggering action in said video displayed by said display means, a necessary triggering action from said list of said triggering action types.

- 25 14. The index generation apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said display means displays a list of additional

information that are registered in advance, in addition to said list of triggering action types, and said input means receives necessary information that is selected based on said list of additional information that is displayed by  
5 said display means.

15. The index generation apparatus according to claim 13, further comprising:

processing means, for processing a triggering action input by said input means,

10 wherein said processing means determines an effective time range for an index, including the times preceding and succeeding the occurrence of said received triggering action, and also determines the importance level of said index.

15 16. An index addition system, for a contents provider that provides video contents, comprising:

index addition means, for adding an index, which is meaningful information, to contents,

20 wherein said index addition means determines a triggering action, which acts as a trigger for an index addition, and adds said index using a timespan extending from the occurrence of said triggering action to an index start, and a timespan extending from the occurrence of said triggering action to an index end.

25 17. The index addition system according to claim 16, wherein said index addition means adds two or more different

and independent indexes to a specific portion of said contents.

18. A program that permits a computer to perform:

a function for defining, in advance, basic index  
5 information, which is information concerning an index that  
constitutes data that describes contents; and

a function for generating said index through operating  
procedures using said basic index information,

wherein said basic index information defines  
10 information concerning a triggering action and information  
concerning a starting time and an ending time that fall in a  
predetermined timespan beginning at the occurrence of said  
triggering action.

19. The program according to claim 18, wherein said basic  
15 index information defines information concerning the  
hierarchy of a single triggering index formed of a single  
triggering action, and information concerning an index that  
is formed by multiple triggering actions affecting each  
other.

20 20. A program for implementing a function that uses a  
triggering action to trigger the index generation of an  
index which is data concerning contents, permitting a  
computer to perform:

a function for receiving a triggering action that is  
25 selected from among multiple triggering actions defined in  
advance;

a function for determining an effective time range for an index based on a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index start, and a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index end, said timespans being defined in advance; and

a function for employing said effective time range to generate an index corresponding to said triggering action.

21. The program according to claim 20 that permits said computer to further perform:

10 a function for adding another index upon the initiation of another triggering action for that portion of contents for which an index is generated by said triggering action.

22. A storage medium on which a computer stores a computer readable program that permits said computer to perform:

15 a process for defining, in advance, basic index information, which is information concerning an index that constitutes data that describes contents; and

a process for generating said index through operating procedures using said basic index information,

20 wherein, in said process for defining said basic index information, information concerning a triggering action, which acts as a trigger for an index generation, and information concerning a starting time and an ending time that fall in a predetermined timespan beginning at the occurrence of said triggering action are defined.

23. A storage medium on which a computer stores a computer

readable program for implementing a function that uses a triggering action to trigger the index generation of an index which is data concerning contents, said program permitting a computer to perform:

5 a process for receiving a triggering action that is selected from among multiple triggering actions defined in advance;

10 a process for determining an effective time range for an index based on a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index start, and a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index end, said timespans being defined in advance; and

a process for employing said effective time range to generate an index corresponding to said triggering action.

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